
The MCAA Advisory

The Newsletter of Medal Collectors of America

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What's New on Our Website!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

www.medalcollectors.org

From the Editor

This is an exciting time for Medal Collectors of America. Your Board has been meeting regularly to map out our future. John Sallay is in charge of this thrust and will be reporting on a regular basis.

I am delighted to announce the availability of an off print of the Truxtun article. Signed by its three authors, Chris Neuzil, Lenny Vaccaro and Todd Creekman, it features full page versions of each image as well as simple column (i.e. full page) text. This truly special edition limited to 25 numbered copies, is now available at \$50.00, checks to MCA care of Barry Tayman.

Older members will recall offprints of David Menchell's series on the medals of the French and Indian War, also David Alexander's definitive treatment of the SOM medals. We have half a dozen copies of each of these fine works available at \$35.00 each.

We received a solid response to our request for help on a book on the Admiral Vernon's. Erik Goldstein supplied a new variety as well as images of Vernon on a pitcher in the collection of Colonial Williamsburg. Chris Eimer sent us images of Admiral Vernon on a silver soup ladle. Alvan Markle gets the prize for first to respond; Warren Lloyd gets the prize for his impressive list of medals owned including an image of that great rarity MG 108. Stacks Americana sale contributed a new (and, thankfully, under described) variety. Most astounding of all, Dr. C. of Argentina volunteered Jorge Ferrari's unpublished manuscript on the Vernon series which, we suspect, will roll our socks down.

One of the delights of medal collecting is its international dimension as best exemplified, perhaps, by the recent FIDEM Congress. So too with decorations where the British auction houses most often lead the parade. Last month, Canada chimed in with its own contribution, the second specimen known of the "British Resentment" medal, Betts 584. Betts devotees will recall the Titanic

competition for the first specimen (in silver) between Lucien LaRiviera and John Ford. Lucien won out but John was able to recoup when the LaRiviera collection, came to market. When, in turn, Ford sold his collection this item fetched no less than \$32,000 at the hammer. The Canadian example, the first we have seen in bronze, slept its way to some lucky buyer at \$1,050. Our hobby is not only international, it is filled with surprises.

Webmaster's Report

(by Ben Weiss)

The past year 2007 began a significant expansion of our website to include:

- 1) The listing of back issues of the MCA Advisory.
- 2) The completion of three series of medals: The American Art Union ; The Society of Medallists; and the Hall of Fame for Great Americans.
- 3) A new feature of Links to some thirty Medal Collections on the Web.
- 4) A new feature of Links to Medal Organizations.
- 5) New features of Links to a Comprehensive List of Reference Material and Annotated, Selected Lists of Reference Material relevant to medal collectors.
- 6) Listing of Meetings and Shows of interest to medal collectors.
- 7) New books and other information of interest to our members.

Anyone who has additional information on any of the above, please let me know so I can add them to our site.

For the new year 2008 we plan to expand the website further to add major new dimensions to it in order to further enhance its usefulness and interest.

- 1) We plan to have a section called Members' Medals where members may submit images and descriptions to the Webmaster for posting on the website. The submitted images

should be of high quality and should be deemed of sufficient interest to other members. This new feature will be limited to current members of the MCA.

2) We plan to add a Collectors' Forum where individuals may submit questions or comments about medals. These should be submitted to the Webmaster for editing and relevance. Answers to these questions may be sent to the Webmaster for posting. This section of the website is open to all who are interested in learning more about their medals or who wish to comment on them.

These latter new features are still in the planning stage. Therefore, all comments, suggestions, additions, etc., are welcomed. Please be reminded that this is YOUR website, and I would like to have as much input from our members as possible. My goal is to make our site dynamic, informative, interesting, educational, and just plain fun to view.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the enormous help and advice received from Sam Pennington and for the generosity of Heath MacAlpine in supplying so many medal images. I also appreciate the recent offers of help from several other members in setting up the new features on our website.

Please be sure to visit:

www.medalcollectors.org

Best wishes,

Ben

Samuel C. Pennington, Publisher of
Maine Antique Digest, 1929-2008
(by Art Mayers and Clayton Pennington)

Samuel Charles Pennington III died on February 2, 2008, at Miles Memorial Hospital in Damariscotta, Maine.

Pennington was born on September 18, 1929, in Baltimore, Maryland, to Agnes Johnston Pennington and Samuel Charles

Pennington, Jr. He grew up in Baltimore in an 1850's house that his family shared with his great-aunt and grandmother.

He was educated at Calvert School in Baltimore, Phillips Exeter Academy in Exeter, New Hampshire, and Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, all on scholarship.

Pennington joined the Air Force after graduating from college and trained as a navigator-bombardier on KC-135s and B-36s. His tours of duty included Newfoundland, Vietnam, Thailand, Guam, and Labrador, as well as Loring Air Force Base (Limestone, Maine), Carswell AFB (Fort Worth, Texas), Barksdale AFB (Shreveport, Louisiana), and Dow AFB (Bangor, Maine). Pennington served 21 years in the military.

While at Carswell, he met Sally Clayton. They were married on April 26, 1958. The couple had five children and 11 grandchildren.

While Pennington was stationed in Bangor, Maine, in the late 1960's, the couple ran an antiques shop part time. They specialized in early American painted furniture. Pennington would often tell the story of the time a woman from New York City wandered into the shop, looked around, and asked incredulously, "How come everything in here is so old?"

The Penningtons grew frustrated when they couldn't find a reliable source of information about the pieces they were buying and selling.

After retirement in 1973, they settled in Waldoboro, Maine, in the Waterman house on Friendship Road. The Watermans had lived in the house from 1775 until 1932. The Penningtons were only the third family to live in the early Georgian home.

In November 1973, Sam and Sally Pennington launched the *Maine Antique Digest* from the kitchen of their Waldoboro home.

A "from the Editor" note in the first issue read, "It is with some trepidation, but a deep sense of pride that I launch this

publication...As to our purposes and aims, we shall try to be both enlightening and entertaining in covering the Maine antiques scene. Our particular fascination is with the people in the antique business and the ebb and flow of goods in the antique market. The people are fascinating, complex, simple, devious, open, flamboyant, learned, dense, stubborn, all of these and more, but with a rich store of stories to tell and knowledge to share...Here in Maine, we are really on the last frontier of the business...We will try to examine some of the problem areas of the business such as fakes, thefts, lack of retail trade, and whatever else comes our way. We shall try to be forthright and call them as we see them, favoring neither collector nor dealer in this rather wonderful, fun game of antiques.”

In 1976 Sally Pennington told a reporter, “We put out the first three issues with one portable typewriter, using the kitchen for an office. We got our five kids and their school friends to do the wrapping, addressing, and mailing.”

In the early years, Pennington did plenty of travel, running a route from Vermont to Connecticut, photographing antiques and selling ads. For eight years, he traveled with a Bronica camera, lights, and background paper.

Because he was the sole writer and photographer in the early days of *M.A.D.*, he once employed a pen name, “Lance Poulet,” French, he thought at the time, for “chicken on a stick,” harking back to *M.A.D.*’s distinctive weathervane logo. Years later, he learned Lance Poulet was slang for “prostitute on a stick.”

From the earliest days, the children took an active part in the publication of *M.A.D.* The black-and-white newsprint tabloid now runs about 250 pages and has a readership of some 25,000 dealers, auctioneers, and collectors.

From the beginning, *Maine Antique Digest* has examined the marketplace. In a 2000 interview for *Maine Times*, Pennington said, “Prices are everything in the antique

business, yet you couldn’t get much good information back then, and there was only this dinky little price guide, where the prices never changed, year after year...It wasn’t until later that we found out the owner [of the price guide] had rigged the prices because he was a collector and liked them low.”

Pennington remarked about the trade, “The antiques business has everything but sex—and they don’t have time for that. There’s greed, chicanery, money, covetousness...There’s an appreciation of the artifacts of the past. Working in this business, there’s a lot of drama.”

In an article in *Johns Hopkins Magazine*, Wendell D. Garrett, senior vice president of Americana at Sotheby’s and editor-at-large for *The Magazine Antiques*, said: “The brilliance of Sam Pennington is that this was a market that wasn’t being taken care of before *M.A.D.*...What Sam created is like the *People* magazine of the business.”

“There are people who adore him,” Lita Solis-Cohen, senior editor of *M.A.D.*, said of Pennington, in the same article. “There are people who are furious at him because he’s so honest. And there are people who are afraid of him because of the power of his pen.

For a short while, the Penningtons also published the *Waldoboro Weekly*.

Pennington served on the SAD 40 school board for many years, including several years as its chairman. As the chairman he guided the board with an even hand although his bias was to provide every student the funding needed to secure a superior education. He supported organizations that raised money to augment SAD 40 programs targeted toward teachers and students.

In 2000 he and Sally endowed the Maine Antique Digest Scholarship Fund, an annual award to a graduate of Medomak Valley High School in Waldoboro entering postsecondary school in one of the “useful” trades, such as but not limited to building, automotive, and graphic arts. Pennington often

remarked about the scholarship, which he hoped would result in a more vibrant Waldoboro, "The world has too many lawyers; we need more plumbers."

In October 2006, he was honored by the Maine Antiques Dealers Association "for his contribution to the world of antiques in Maine and beyond." Nancy Glazer, then president of MADA, spoke at the ceremony and said, "...[M.A.D.] quickly became our bible and our guide through the turbulent and exhilarating waters of antiques."

He was a collector of the works of Maine artists and held collections of medals and aviation memorabilia.

Pennington was a Waldoboro representative on the board of Lincoln County Television and served as the board chairman for several years until his failing health caused him to step down in January. For several years he and Art Mayers co-hosted a weekly interview, news, and opinion show on LCTV, *News With Sam & Art*.

He believed in local philanthropy and was an active member of the Democratic Party. In spite of poor health in the last few months, Pennington faithfully went daily to his office at the *Maine Antique Digest* to oversee its operation and work on his ongoing projects, television show, and philanthropies.

He was fond of saying that old age is not for sissies.

Pennington is survived by his wife, Sally Pennington; his children, Katherine Pennington and her husband, Nicholas Azzaretti, of Newcastle, Maine; Nellie Pennington and her husband, Nathan Hine, of South Strafford, Vermont; Sarah McCleary of Georgetown, Texas; Samuel Clayton Pennington and his wife, Shane, of Nobleboro, Maine; and Mary Pennington and her husband, David O'Connor, of Durham, Maine; and by grandchildren Calen Pennington of Somerville, Massachusetts; Hannah Pennington of Orono, Maine; Allison McCleary of Portland, Maine; Chiara and Salvatore Azzaretti of Newcastle,

Maine; Anne McCleary of Gray, Maine; Amos Hine of South Strafford, Vermont; Amelia and Olivia Pennington of Nobleboro, Maine; and Leo and Maysa O'Connor of Durham, Maine. He is also survived by a brother, Christopher Pennington, and his wife, Deborah, and their son Andrew of Catonsville, Maryland.

He was predeceased by a sister, Agnes Benziger.

Gifts in his memory may be made to Southern Maine Community College, SMCC Foundation, General Scholarship Fund, 2 Fort Road, South Portland, ME 04106; the Waldoboro Food Pantry, 97 Friendship Road, Waldoboro, ME 04572; or the Waldoboro Public Library, PO Box 768, Waldoboro, ME 04572.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, March 1, at 2 p.m. at the Waldo Theatre, 916 Main Street, Waldoboro. A reception will follow at the Maine Antique Digest building, 911 Main Street. (Snow date is Sunday, March 2.)



[This wonderful writeup of Sam's life comes to us courtesy of the Maine Antique Digest. Dave Bowers will comment on the man's numismatic contributions in the March issue.—ed.]

Edward F. Cragin And The 1889 Centennial of Washington's Inauguration (by George Fuld)

The late Susan Douglas published a major article in *The Numismatist* of 1949, describing the medals issued for the 1889 Centennial of Washington's inauguration. The article was remarkably complete with only a few medals that have been described since. One medal, the 1889 St. Gaudens issue, Douglas 53, in gold sold for \$391,000 in the Norweb sale of 2006. A newly discovered pattern piece of the St. Gaudens medal was offered by Stacks in their Americana sale of January 16-17, 2007 as lot 6824.

The only other major addition, described is the Edward F. Cragin medal, assigned Douglas 63 by Rulau and Fuld. This medal was listed in the first edition of Baker's *Medallic Portraits of Washington* in 1985. Rulau and Fuld reported this newly found medal, struck in white metal, in the collection of Leon Hendrickson. A copper specimen of the medal was sold in an auction sale about 2004, and more recently in the Coin Galleries sale of December 13, 2007 as lot 2002. This copper specimen came from the Gorham Company archives and sold for \$920. The medal is shown in Figure 1, courtesy of Stacks.

On the obverse there is a reproduction of Douglas 51 issued for the Chicago commemoration, with the obverse and reverse appearing side by side across the center, a standing angel with wings outspread above, U.S. shield draped with six flags and crested with an eagle displayed below. The reverse reads, TO EDWARD F. CRAGIN / (branch) /

IN RECOGNITION OF / HIS VALUABLE SERVICES / IN ORIGINATING AND PLANNING / THE PATRIOTIC OBSERVANCE AT / CHICAGO OF THE CENTENNIAL / OF THE NATION'S / BIRTHDAY / *** FROM HIS FRIENDS AND COLABORERS *** The word "colaborers" minus a hyphen after CO seems at first glance to be poor grammar but on reflection is a happy choice. It was struck by Childs & Co. of Chicago.

It is worthwhile to speculate why the 1889 Centennial created such widespread interest, especially in New York and Chicago. There were only five medals issued for Washington's birth Centennial in 1832. There were about thirteen medals issued for Washington's death Centennial in 1899. There are well over one hundred medals issued for the Bicentennial of Washington's birth in 1932. There are only a few issues for the Bicentennial of Washington's death in 1999. Medals for the Bicentennial of Washington's inauguration in 1989 are virtually unknown. However, the medals issued for the 1889 Centennial number about 75 and are a major outpouring of well designed and diverse issues.

The celebration of the Centennial in 1889 was a major event in New York. About half of the 1889 medals were produced for the New York event. A book was published in 1892, edited by Clarence Winthrop Bowen entitled *The History of the Centennial Celebration of George Washington as First President of the United States*. It is a large volume of some 675 pages. On the cover of the book, is a gold foil replica of the St. Gaudens 1889 medal, Douglas 53.

Not to be outdone, the city of Chicago held a major event for the Centennial. A book was published entitled *The Nations Birthday Chicago's Celebration of Washington's Inauguration 1789 April 30 1889*. This is a 323 page book with chapters entitled "Preparatory Work", "Services in the Churches", "Exercises in the Schools", "The

Mass Meetings”, “Centennial Addresses,” “The Banquet—Toasts and Responses”, “The Pyrotechnical Display” and finally “The Loan Exhibition”. Details of what took place during the celebration in April, 1889 are given in the various chapters.

The loan exhibition was held in the Art Rooms of the Exposition Building and consisted of thousands of items loaned for the occasion. Some 500 of the items on display were listed. Numismatic items of interest included the following:

- 18. Medallion of George Washington, made in Paris
 - 22. Four dollar continental bill paid to Stephen Walker for his service in the Revolutionary War.
 - 25. A badge in yellow ribbon, with Washington medallion worn at the Inauguration of Washington.
 - 97. Copper cent, 1787
 - 98. Washington medal of 1781
 - 118. A badge of the centennial birthday of Gen. Washington.
 - 125. A Washington penny, 1791.
 - 127. Three pieces of Continental money, 1767, 1776, 1780.
 - 141. A rare portrait of Washington, engraved by Savage, 1783. (Note: This was the portrait that the 1783 Washington cents resembled.)
 - 466. Washington buttons worn by citizens at time of the inauguration, 1789.
 - 503. Washington medal, smallest specimen ever made. (Note: This could refer to the 1824 Washington-Lafayette medal, Baker 198 or the Lord’s prayer issues of 1889.)
- In 1881 Cragin was listed as a co-owner of Canadian patent CA12518 entitled “Improvements on Pan Forming Machines”. He was a major player in the Maritime Canal Co. of Nicaragua incorporated in 1887. Their aim was to build a canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific through Nicaragua, but the work was doomed from the start. Partial work was

done under dire conditions, but was suspended in 1890 when bankruptcy declared.

Cragin was most vocal about the United States involvement in our affair with Spain leading to the Spanish-American war of 1899. Figure 2 displays an excerpt from the New York Times of December 19, 1896. Cragin, as Chairman of the local Cuban Relief Committee gives a warning of bogus recruiting practices.

In 1901, Edward F. Cragin was Vice President of the Equitable Life Assurance Society. In 1902, Cragin was a Director of The Trust Company of America and on the board of The International Banking Corporation established by the Connecticut Legislature in June 1901.

One can only speculate that the original award medal struck in honor of Cragin, would have been in a precious metal—either silver or gold. The white metal piece in the Hendrickson collection is probably a die trial. Since at least two specimens are known in copper, undoubtedly others were struck for members of the committee. Hopefully, a copy of a precious metal issue will surface sometime in the future.





Letters to the Editor

John-

I ran across this at the New York Historical Society last week. It is a full page ad, dated 1852, from a 16 page newspaper (The Literary World, published in New York), containing a fixed price list of (mostly) French medals with at least one Comitia piece included. Full citation is The Literary World (1847-1853), New York: May 15, 1852. Vol. 10, Iss. 276; p. 351 (1 page).

Regarding the seller, one H. Bailliere, he was a New York bookseller apparently of French extraction. An advertisement elsewhere places Bailliere at 290 Broadway, and indicates: "H. Bailliere takes this opportunity of announcing that he has within the last six months [this, from 1851] made considerable additions to his stock, and that he has now for sale a large collection of standard and valuable English and French works...He continues to receive a case from Europe by almost every steamer".

Joel thought this might interest you as it is pre-Civil War and not mentioned in Attinelli, Davis, or Bowers.

And if either of you can track down an original copy of the Literary World for the date in question, you will be able to make a quite attractive broadside type of display!

H. Baillière, the New York bookseller referenced in the advertisement, was one Hippolyte Émile Baillière (1832-1876), son of Pierre-François Hippolyte Baillière (1809-1867). Pierre-François was the brother of Jean-Baptiste Baillière (1797-1885), a French bookseller and important publisher of medical textbooks. Jean-Baptiste met success early in life; indeed, by 1824 his publishing catalog contained forty titles. Jean-Baptiste later opened branches throughout the world, dispatching sons and nephews to the United States, Australia, Germany and England. His publishing firm survives to the present day, based in Paris, currently operating under the name Groupe JB Baillière Santé.

H. Baillière, and his brother Charles Edmund Baillière, were sent to the United States in 1851 to expand the family business. The Baillière-Brothers Company, on Broadway in New York, published from 1851 to 1868, and also operated as a bookseller, as indicated by an 1851 advertisement in *Literary World*: "H. Bailliere takes this opportunity of announcing that he has within the last six months [this, from 1851] made considerable additions to his stock, and that he has now for sale a large collection of standard and valuable English and French works...He continues to receive a case from Europe by almost every steamer."

Among the medals listed, #1 is likely the Société Montyon et Franklin Medal (1833, Fuld FR.M.SO.3), and by coincidence an example is present in Stack's January, 2008 (Americana) sale, lot 7167. #2 is probably the Franklin Natus Boston, #3 the Washington Before Boston, and of course #10 the Libertas

Americana. Clearly the unknown French collector of medals had some interest in pieces related to America.

Bibliography: Medicographia, Vol. 27, No. 1, 2005, accessed via medicographia.com.

Regards,

Len Augsburger.

Has just received from Paris a fine **COLLECTION OF MEDALS**, in Bronze, &c., commemorating
Historical Events, Scientific Discoveries, &c., &c.

THE FOLLOWING IS A LIST, WITH THEIR PRICES:

PHARMACISTS ARE REQUESTED TO BRING IN THE SUMMER

[illegible]

Dear John:

I just received the latest issue of the MCA Advisory, and I wanted to congratulate you on another fine issue. In my quest for knowledge about medals, I always find that I learn something new in every issue.

I wanted to drop you a note to continue our correspondence on the George III Large Size Indian peace medals that you mentioned in an earlier message. I see that two different medals of this type are offered at an upcoming auction, and each has a different look to them. One of the George III medals is described as having well polished, highly reflective surfaces which are typical of actual Indian wear and usage. It also has old marks and scratches on both sides. The other medal, however, is not polished or reflective, and it has very nice steel, lilac, and blue toning on both sides. There is an absence of marks on this particular medal.

In the federal coin context, people tend to look at things like wear, polish, nicks, marks, etc. in a negative light. It seems that only the most pristine examples of federal coins are worthy of being collected, which is unfortunate in my opinion.

In the Indian peace medal context, I would be interested in hearing your views on whether these characteristics (such as polish and nicks) are more likely to be overlooked and accepted, because it is expected that the medals were actually worn by prominent Indian chiefs. In a sense, does this evidence of use actually add to the history and therefore, the desirability, of the pieces? I would expect that a pristine example of these medals would not be nearly as interesting, especially since it is likely that a pristine example was never even worn or used by an Indian chief.

I would be interested in hearing your thoughts.

Kind regards,

Michael Savinelli

Dear Barry Tayman and Mike Hodder,

The question Mike raises in the last paragraph of his letter is one to which JJF would have given a two page answer. All I want from you is something shorter and I will publish the lot in the February issue.

Many thanks,

John

Hi John,

Many seasoned collectors, myself included, do not shy away from Indian peace medals with evidence of wear and/or polishing. Unlike worn coins, such marks are generally accepted as legitimate evidence that a peace medal was awarded, and worn by a Native American. However, while some medals show evidence of hard daily use over a long period of time (substantial wear and/or polishing on both sides, missing or replaced hangers, crude holes in place of hangers, and badly bruised edges), many others exhibit only the kind of wear and/or polishing commensurate with occasional use. One can reasonably speculate that such medals were worn only for important events.

I do not feel that a convincing argument can be made that all high grade medals or medals with minimal wear were not awarded medals. More importantly, most peace medals cannot be traced to the original recipients, and the few that I am aware of that can, do not exhibit evidence of extended hard use. Also, the manner the manner in which peace medals were worn likely varied among the different tribes. Thus, before we can make any hard conclusions on this subject, much work remains.

Barry

Dear John:

Michael Savinelli asks a question that seems to arise every so often and to which there is no simple answer. In my experience I've met collectors who will not have any Indian Peace Medal that is better than VF to EF and shows signs that it may have been used as intended by the recipient. Chris Schenkel was a good example of this kind, he often passed on medals in AU or better grade simply because he didn't think such pieces could ever have been worn and passed down to descendants.

He contented himself in thinking that a worn medal meant one that had been worn (sorry) and that a pristine one had not. Those collectors who favor the "circulated" medals have usually been the more sophisticated ones, those who've gone beyond a first reading of Julian and Prucha and Belden and have looked at treaty texts, visited institutional collections, corresponded with modern tribal leaders, studied historical relations with indigenous peoples, and so on.

On the other hand, I've watched some other collectors favor only AU and Unc prooflike medals and spurning those in lesser grades. These are typically men who've come to the field from outside where the rules of successful collecting stress condition as the principal desideratum.

They are often new collectors. Some want to complete a collection of all American medals and do not feel uncomfortable including off metal specimens never meant for award in order to reach the goal.

One might conclude that I seem to favor the former over the latter type but here's where my answer necessarily starts getting fuzzy around the edges. It doesn't take much thought to realize that wear, alone, does not necessarily mean a medal had been given to an indigene and worn by him. Wear can be simulated. I've seen a few Grant medals that were Fine to VF but did not have holes for suspension. I've seen what are to me obvious concoctions that were also heavily worn. Yet there are holed silver

medals known out of long dug graves that are AU and Unc and that must have gone into the ground with their original recipients, so high grade cannot by itself disqualify a medal from being an awarded one.

Perhaps the only answer that might satisfy is the one a collector finds for himself. Since one cannot always judge an "original presented" medal from a "government remainder" by wear, and since so few medals in the marketplace have credible pedigrees attached to them, I take the position that any genuine silver (and where appropriate, copper or bronze) first peoples medal is a desirable collectable regardless of condition. Each carries with it the historical cachet that adds interest and value to a medal, whether it's VF or AU.

We're really taking about connoisseurship here, aren't we, and the first steps along the rough path leading to that goal are reading and study and mastery of the art of discrimination. Indian Peace Medals is not a field for the faint of heart but for me that's one of its attractions, it's a field one will never entirely master but it's fun getting better at it as the years wind on.

Namaskars

Mike Hodder

Dear John,

I enjoyed the article on the Truxtun medal in the recent MCA Advisory. Do you have contact info for the authors? I thought they might be interested to know that NYHS has one of the extremely rare type 2 medals, as well several of the other more common types. I've attached images of the type 2, which came to NYHS as a gift of James Hazen Hyde in 1947.

Hope all is well.

Sincerely,

Margi Hofer

Margaret K. Hofer
Curator of Decorative Arts
The New-York Historical Society
170 Central Park West
New York, NY 10024



Dear John:

I read the spectacular article in the most recent issue of the Medal Collectors of America's monthly journal about the Captain Thomas Truxtun Congressional Medal. I really liked the fact that the article was full of historical information about Truxtun (I certainly learned more about him), and it gave a

wealth of information on the numbers of medals extant.

In the article, the authors write, "all three known white metal examples of Truxtun's medal exhibit tin pest, possibly because of the alloy used." I have never heard of tin pest, so I found a definition online which states,

"Tin pest is an autocatalytic, allotropic transformation of the element tin, which causes deterioration of tin objects at low temperatures. It was observed in medieval Europe that the pipes of church pipe organs were affected in cool climates. As soon as the tin began decomposing, the process sped up, and seemed to feed on itself. During the allotropic transformation (at about 56 degrees Fahrenheit and below), pure tin transforms from the (silvery, ductile) allotope of white tin to brittle, grey tin. Eventually it decomposes into powder, hence the name tin pest."

Based on your travels, research, and viewing of many, many medals, do you know how common tin pest is with historical medals and how many historical medals may have been lost or damaged from this affliction? I believe that some of the proofs of the Comitia Americana medals were struck for Jefferson in tin. Are any preventative measures being taken to prevent these from getting the pest?

Thank you and keep up the good work with the MCA Advisory!

Regards,

Michael Savinelli

Hi John:

I've researched this topic and found some interesting information. First, it would be hard to apply the scientific data categorically to all "tin" medals, since what we commonly refer to as "white metal" or tin is usually a variable alloy which may contain bismuth, antimony, lead, copper or silver in addition to tin. Pewter falls into this group with tin alloyed to copper

with varying amounts of lead, depending on the quality of the pewter. I have some more detailed information below, relating more to the use of tin solders rather than its use in medal production, but the same physical chemical properties would apply. The risk of tin pest would be greatest in those medals and coins struck in pure tin or tin alloyed with copper alone. Even so, the process is slow or nonexistent if the coins and medals are stored at normal room temperatures. At 13° C (55° F), it would still take 18 months or more for the appearance of the less dense, powdery alpha form of tin. In my experience, I have many "white metal" medals and tokens, few of which demonstrate any pest formation. I have several American Plantation tokens which have a few small areas of corrosion which might represent pest formation. These have a high tin content and as a result, may have been more susceptible to pesting, but the pieces I have has been stable for some years. I will try to contact Susan Maltby, who writes for Coin World on matters of coin and medal conservation, and see if she has any further information regarding the prevention and treatment of tin pest.

Best regards,

David Menchell

WHAT IS TIN PEST?

(David Menchell's enclosure)

Tin is a metal that is allotropic, meaning that it has different crystal structures under varying conditions of temperature and pressure. Tin has two allotropic forms. "Normal" or white beta tin has a stable tetragonal crystal structure with a density of 7.31g/cm³. Upon cooling below about 13.2oC, beta tin turns extremely slowly into alpha tin. "Grey" or alpha tin has a cubic structure and a density of only 5.77g/cm³ 1.

Alpha tin is also a semiconductor, not a metal. The expansion of tin from white to grey causes most tin objects to crumble. The macro

conversion of white to grey tin takes on the order of 18 months². Figure 1, which is likely the most famous modern photograph of tin pest, **[not included herein—ed.]** shows the phenomenon quite clearly. Figure 1. Transformation of Beta-Tin into Alpha-Tin in Sn-0.5Cu at T <10oC from Y. Karlya, C. Gagg, and W.J. Plumbridge, "Tin pest in lead-free solders", Soldering and Surface Mount Technology, 13/1 [2000] 39-40. This phenomenon has been known for centuries and there are many interesting, probably apocryphal, stories about tin pest. Perhaps the most famous is of the tin buttons on Napoleon's soldiers' coats disintegrating while on their retreat from Moscow. Since tin pest looks like the tin has become diseased, many in the middle-ages attributed it to Satan as many tin organ pipes in Northern European churches fell victim to the effect.

Initially, tin pest was called "tin disease" or "tin plague". I believe that the name "tin pest" came from the German translation for the word "plague" (i.e. in German plague is "pest"). To most people with a little knowledge of materials, the conversion of beta to alpha tin at colder temperatures seems counter intuitive. Usually materials shrink at colder temperatures, not expand. Although it appears that the mechanism is not completely understood, it is likely due to grey alpha tin having lower entropy than white beta tin. With the removal of heat at the lower temperatures a lower entropy state would likely be more stable. Since the conversion to grey tin requires expansion, the tin pest will usually nucleate at an edge, corner, or surface. The nucleation can take 10s of months, but once it starts, the conversion can be rapid, causing structural failure within months.² Although tin pest can form at <13.2oC, most researchers believe that the kinetics are very sluggish at this temperature. There seems to be general agreement in the literature that the maximum rate of tin pest formation occurs at - 30oC to - 40 oC. 1 THE EFFECT OF ALLOYING

ELEMENTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT ON

TIN PEST Several alloying metals retard or eliminate the formation of tin pest. The most effective tin pest retarding alloying elements are bismuth, antimony, and lead.³ There are limited data that suggest that silver has a retarding effect on tin pest formation, however the effect appears to be moderate at best. Hence, many people assume that it is not proven that silver significantly retards the formation of tin pest, especially in field or use conditions. A “rule of thumb” is that alloying metals that are highly soluble suppress tin pest. This effect is likely due to the decoration of dislocations or other defect sites that inhibit the required lattice expansion.³ Elements that are not as soluble in, and that form intermetallics with tin are less likely to suppress tin pest.³ Examples of such metals are copper and silver. Table 1 is a summary of the effect of some lead-free alloying elements on tin pest.

Alloying Metal Tin Pest Retardant %

Concentration for effective Inhibition Bi Strong
0.3 Sb Strong 0.5 Pb Strong 5.0 Cu None-
Weak ? >> 5.0 Ag Weak- Mod ? > 5.0 Table 1.

Tin pest retarding effects of lead-free alloying metals. Note that while bismuth and antimony will suppress tin pest at concentrations of less than 1%, about 5% by weight of lead is needed. Silver suppresses tin pest, but at a much reduced level. Copper is considered by most researchers to have little effect. **[Copper plugs were added to tin medals in the 18th century, and these seem to work pretty well—ed.]** It is widely known that high pressure hinders the formation of tin pest and tensile stress exacerbates it. These phenomena make sense when one considers that anything that makes it easier to expand the lattice (e.g. tensile stress) should enhance the formation of tin pest, and anything that compresses the lattice (e.g. compressive stress) will retard tin pest formation. It is also reported that tin oxide formation at the surface will retard tin pest formation. Several knowledgeable workers in the soldering field

believe that many unknown factors such as organic contaminants probably retard tin pest

John:

Your research team is incredible! I think I sent you that question on the 5th, and I see that David's response came back to you on the 6th. Pretty impressive!!

That answer is very informative, and please thank David for taking the time to write it. I hope it is OK for me to send these questions to you and they are not burdensome. I will try to scale back my enthusiasm, but this area of numismatics is extremely interesting to me!

Kind regards,

Mike Savinelli

John--

After the NYINC, I received something really exciting, a medal for a bishop from Colombia, ca1730s. A portrait medal, cast bronze, Italian school. 55mm? Very Fine condition decently executed & decently cast. There is no reason to doubt it is an original cast. It is the earliest South American medal for a non-Royal, and one of the earliest medals of this hemisphere of a person who actually lived & worked in the New World. Also, the first Colombian medal. Also, the first New World religious medal. I bought it in a London auction and I could direct you to the catalog, lot # and photo. (I assume it will still be archived on-line).

In closing, thanks for all you've done & continue to do for MCA. I was one of the alleged founders and never figured out how to shake loose from my business long enough to contribute very much. You have come to the task with drive, TALENT and a certain democratic touch.

Paul Bosco

Dear John,

I thought readers of the MCA Advisory would like to know about some interesting items coming up in the March 31, 2008 Coin Galleries Mail and Internet Bid Auction.

For the collectors of American medals, there will be a continuation of items from the Franklinton Collection which began in our February 2008 Baltimore auction. These fall mostly in the field of U.S. Inaugural Medals of the second half of the 20th century and include many rare variants. For those whose tastes run a bit earlier, the Naval Historical Foundation in Annapolis, Maryland has consigned its holdings of Admiral Vernon medals, representing one segment of Leander McCormick-Goodhart's collection. There are over 100 pieces in all grades from About Good to Uncirculated, with a great variety of types represented and little duplication.

For those more interested in more non-American themes, I should mention a very comprehensive collection of Swiss shooting medals (over 160 pieces), in addition to a varied collection of Romanian medals and decorations from the collection of Nicolae Caranfil. And of course we have a variety of medals from our other consignors.

The sale will be online soon, and catalogues will be in the mail shortly as well. For those in our membership who are not on Stack's/Coin Galleries mailing list who would like to receive a copy of the catalogue, they can drop me a line at VICKENY@STACKS.COM and I'll get one out to them.

Best,

Vicken Yegparian

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